DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 839 EC 300 581

AUTHOR Lanier, Cynthia C.
TITLE A Community Volunteer Intervention Program To Increase Reading Skills and Abilities of Learning Disabled Resource Students.
PUB DATE May 91
NOTE 71p.; Practicum Report, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Intervention; *Learning Disabilities; Primary Education; Problem Solving; Program Effectiveness; Reading Attitudes; Reading Skills; Resource Room Programs; School Community Relationship; Spelling; Student Attitudes; *Tutorial Programs; *Volunteers

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a program in which community members (retired citizens, parents, and others) provided tutorial services over a 12-week period to five learning disabled primary grade students in a resource room program. Comparison of pretest and posttest results showed a greater than 20 percent increase in reading scores. Weekly spelling test scores also increased as did students' problem solving skills. Improved student attitudes toward reading were observed. Learning games and both teacher made and commercial materials were used in the weekly tutorial sessions. Appendices include the teacher observational checklists for evaluating student reading enjoyment and self assurance, handouts listing desirable teaching behaviors for volunteers and ethical behavior for volunteers, and a summary of typical characteristics of first, second, and third grade children. Two attachments demonstrate dissemination activities of this project. Includes a total of 17 references. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED335839

A COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER INTERVENTION PROGRAM TO INCREASE READING SKILLS AND ABILITIES OF LEARNING DISABLED RESOURCE STUDENTS

by

Cynthia C. Lanier

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education, Nova University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

May/1991

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Cynthia C. Lanier
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EC 300581

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

A Community Volunteer Intervention Program To Increase Reading Skills And Abilities Of Learning Disabled Resource Students.
Lanier, Cynthia C., 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University,
The Center for the Advancement of Education.
Descriptors: Volunteers/ Volunteer Training/ School Volunteer Program/ Tutoring/ Tutorial Programs/ School Community Relationships/ Community Benefits/ Parent School Relationships/ Elementary Education/ Enrichment Activities/ Remedial Programs/ Reading Difficulties/ Teaching Methods/ Reading Interests/

This abstract describes a community volunteer program to increase the reading skills and abilities of specific learning disabled resource students in an elementary school. A target group of students in the first, second and third grades received tutorial services. Retired citizens, business community members and the resource teacher implemented a 12-week tutorial program. The implementation utilized teacher made and commercial activities. Appropriate reading materials were also used to build skill development, fluency and problem-solving skills. The results of comparing pretest and posttest scores on a skills assessment test demonstrated that the students exceeded a 20 percent increase in scores. The weekly spelling test scores also increased. The ratings on the teacher observational checklists for enjoyment and self-assurance also improved. The students' illustrations demonstrated the development of problem-solving skills. The writer was invited and shared the project with teacher and parent organizations. The Specific Learning Disabilities Supervisor has encouraged other staff to consider this project. The writer was asked to be available for consultation and future development. The appendices include observational checklists and developmental materials for the volunteers. The attachments include an agenda and a bulletin for the meetings when the writer shared the project.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed: Cynthia C. Lanier
Student's name

Minor contributions of a professional character and comparable nonprofessional assistance may also be acknowledged.

Table of Contents

Title Page i

Abstract ii

Authorship Statement iii

Observer's Verification iv

Table of Contents v

Chapters

I. Purpose 1

II. Research and Solution Strategy 11

III. Method 23

IV. Results 37

V. Recommendations 42

Reference List 44

Bibliography 46

Appendices

Appendix A: Teacher Checklist: Enjoyment 49

Appendix B: Teacher Checklist:
Self-Assurance 51

Appendix C: Desirable Teaching Behaviors 53

Appendix D: Ethics for Volunteers 55

Appendix E: The First Grade Child
The Second Grade Child
The Third Grade Child 57

Attachments

Attachment A: Agenda for the Specific
Learning Disabilities
Elementary Full-Time Meeting ... 62

Attachment B: Bulletin for the Association
For Children With Learning
Disabilities 64

CHAPTER I

Purpose

An elementary school located on the southwest coast of Florida was the site for the action-research project. The school is located in the cultural and arts center for Southwest Florida. A diverse population is attracted and represented in this well-populated area. Upper, middle and lower income families inhabit this resort community. Middle-income families represent the majority of the year-round residents.

The total population at the target site is 711 students. Fifty-two percent of the students are male and 48 percent are female. Caucasian students represent 83 percent of the population and 14 percent are Black students. The Black students are bused to the school for racial balance. Also included are Mexican-American students at two percent and Chinese-American at one percent of the population.

The target classroom was a Specific Learning Disabilities Resource Program. The classroom services 18 specific learning disabled students. The resource

room is also referred to as a pull-out program. The students participate in the mainstream regular education classes and the Specific Learning Disabilities Resource Program. Resource students are pulled out to meet individualized educational plan (I.E.P.) objectives. The resource student should be able to function in the mainstream with supplemental help. The specific learning disabilities resource teacher provides this supplemental reading and/or math instruction. This service delivery model is utilized to provide remediation that will facilitate the students success in the mainstream.

The writer is the Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) Resource Teacher at the school. The resource teacher is responsible for reading and/or math remediation to those students that qualify for the Specific Learning Disabilities Program. The teacher services 18 exceptional education students daily. The amount of time students spend in the pull-out program varies from one-to-two hours a day. The students serviced are in the first, second and third grades.

Modifications become necessary in the mainstream and exceptional student education program to accommodate the resource student. The student may need additional assistance to practice skills and complete assignments. The regular education teacher expects the work that was missed while in the resource room to be completed. Programs that offer support and incentives are often missed to be in compliance with individualized educational plan (I.E.P.) time requirements. The student may also be receiving other special education services. Some of these services are Language, Speech and Hearing, Emotional Handicapped and Occupational Therapy Programs. These services are provided in addition to the Specific Learning Disabilities Resource Program. The student may spend more than 12 hours a week in exceptional education programs.

Some of the specific learning disabled resource students at the school are not achieving their educational reading goals with expected mastery levels. This problem is manifested by their difficulty to read and write in the mainstream regular classroom and the

specific learning disabilities resource setting. Testing was administered and analyzed to 18 students in the Specific Learning Disabilities Program. The tests proved a discrepancy between five students' reading skills and expected performance levels.

Low reading ability and skills were exhibited by five of the students. The students did not perform with at least 80 percent accuracy expected to achieve mastery of reading skills. The low skill level of these students seriously impaired functioning in both mainstream and resource programs.

A skills assessment test was also administered to the five students that participated in the action-project. The skills assessment test administered was composed of sound/symbol relationships, words to read, syllable division and a spelling test. Again the students scores were below the 80 percent mastery level for successful reading. The scores ranged from 30 to 62 Percent.

Student A is a first grade male that received a score of 30 percent on the skills assessment test. A

score of at least 80 percent would indicate mastery of reading skills. The student scored higher on the sound/symbol relationships and lower on the words to read portion. The syllable division and spelling portions were not administered to the first grade student. The extremely low scores indicated that further testing was unnecessary. This student is seven years old and participates in the Emotional Handicapped Program for behavioral interventions. The low-income family status qualifies the student for the free lunch program.

Student B, an eight year old, first grade boy was tested and showed a deficit in reading scores. The student scored 42 percent on sound/symbol relationships and words to read subtests. A score of 80 percent accuracy for mastery level was not achieved. The syllable division and spelling subtests were not administered. The low scores on the sound/symbol and words to read subtests indicated that further testing was unnecessary. The student participates in the Emotionally Handicapped and Occupational Therapy

Programs. Both parents work and the student is a latch-key child.

Student C is a second grade male selected to participate in the action-project. The student scored 62 percent on the four subtests of the reading skills assessment. Eighty percent accuracy should have been achieved to reach mastery level. The student also participates in the Language, Speech and Hearing Program. Both parents are involved in the Parent Teacher Organization and various community projects.

Student D is a third grade female that scored below the mastery level on the test. The student scored 62 percent on the skills assessment test. The sound/symbol relationships, words to read, syllable division and spelling portions were administered. The student comes from a middle-income family with one working parent.

Student E is also a third grade female that scored with 60 percent accuracy as compared to the 80 percent mastery level. All four subtests were administered. The student is abused by an alcoholic father.

Interventions are in progress to protect the student. The student is from a large, Mexican-American family. The low-income family status qualifies the student for the free lunch program. Both parents work and the student is a latch-key child.

The weekly spelling test scores of the five students also supported the existing discrepancy between reading skills and expected performance levels. The students' average of scores on the weekly tests ranged from 37 to 70 percent. The students did not achieve the 80 percent mastery level expected to indicate success in the reading program.

The reading program included teacher observational checklists that were administered to assess the 18 students. The checklists rated the students' enjoyment and self-assurance towards reading. The writer observed and rated the students on a scale of often, sometimes or never. The enjoyment of reading checklist (Appendix A:49) rated the five students in the "never" category. The students' self-assurance in reading was also rated by the teacher on the observational

checklist (Appendix B:51). The ratings of the five students were in the "sometimes" and "never" category. The categories of ratings for the five students further demonstrated the existing discrepancy between the target students' reading skills and expected performance levels.

State and county budget cuts have increased class sizes in the regular and special education classrooms. Time constraints have made it difficult for the mainstream and special teacher to provide individual help. The student is expected to integrate back into the mainstream and complete missed assignments. Homework is necessary to provide practice in the regular and special education curriculum. The resource teacher is expected to remediate deficit areas and facilitate success in the mainstream curriculum.

The reader can see that the five students have low reading skills as demonstrated by test scores below the 80 percent mastery levels. Additional assessments of teacher observational ratings for enjoyment and self-assurance also demonstrated low reading ability. The

writer has proven that a discrepancy exists between the five students reading skills and expected performance levels.

The reader can determine by the problem statement that the students need to improve their reading ability. An increase of reading skills is necessary to promote success in the regular and special classrooms.

The following objectives were drawn to increase the learning disabled resource students reading ability:

1. Over a period of 12 weeks, the five students will increase reading skills by 20 percent on a skills assessment test.

2. After participation in the 12-week practicum, the five target students will score with at least 80 percent mastery on weekly spelling tests.

3. Over a period of 12 weeks, the target students will demonstrate an increased enjoyment and self-assurance towards reading evidenced by any increases in the ratings of the categories on the observational teacher checklists.

4. During the 12-week action-project, the five target students will be able to demonstrate the ability to find alternative solutions to problem solving in stories as evidenced by the students' illustrations.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

A review of the literature disclosed many solutions that could be used. The lack of skills demonstrated by the students that are necessary to develop reading ability has many implications. Causative factors involve a large scope of academic, social and environmental agents. The reader should be aware that the regular and resource reading curriculum are established at the facility. Solutions to facilitate success in reading for learning disabled resource students are needed.

One possible solution to increase reading ability is presented by Herrmann (1988). The writer and researcher believed that the reading process should no longer be thought of as an application of isolated skills. Recent research shows us that a strategic meaning-getting process is required. Reasoning processes are associated with strategic reading. Research has shown that poor readers require explicit

instruction on how to apply processes to construct meaning from text.

Two approaches that are effective are the direct explanation and reciprocal teaching. The direct teaching technique is used at the beginning of a lesson to assist the students to construct meaning from the story. The reciprocal approach is used later to aid in the understanding of the author's message. The approaches can be implemented by adjusting regular routines in the existing reading program. In time poor readers adapted and began to use the strategic reading approaches. The students developed thinking skills that enabled them to understand the text. Strategic reading approaches helped poor readers understand text and facilitated reading skills.

Instructing students to decode and comprehend the printed page is a classroom strategy Goldstone (1989) views as insufficient. Promoting visual literacy will facilitate the viewer to develop high-order thinking skills of analyzing, synthesizing and interpreting. This process does not occur naturally. The student is

taught visual interpretation skills through the use of high quality picture books and illustrated books. Pictures are used to expand comprehension and promote vocabulary. The illustrations allow the viewer to gain information that was once abstract through written descriptions. Young students could be taught to discuss terms of line, color and structure to provide meaning. Modeling of vocabulary terms and critical commentary about the illustrations promoted interpretive skills. Visual literacy enabled the student to think analytically and abstractly which provided confidence to interpret the printed page.

Another solution strategy for students with reading difficulties was implemented by Weiss, et al. (1989). The strategy was adapted from Leinhardt, et al. (1981), as cited by Weiss, et al. (1989) which emphasized that poor readers need an environment of daily increased time for reading. Students with learning disabilities were provided with adult tutors for five-to-ten minutes of additional reading instruction. Students learning increased when

supervised practice time was provided. The similar strategy implemented by Weiss, et al. (1989) utilized adult tutors for a period of 11 weeks. The subjects received at least 36 reading sessions with a duration of 20 minutes. Observations indicated that students with reading difficulties had demonstrated less off-task behaviors and more active responses when tutored.

Tight district budgets, high pupil-teacher ratios and a need to improve reading prompted the South Carolina Department of Education (1985) to utilize volunteers. Volunteers worked with students in small groups and individually. Students that were not doing well and needed to raise reading scores were targeted. Increases in student achievement was accomplished. The adult-student ratio was increased, positive adult models were available and more individualized instruction occurred.

Anderson (1984) describes a program to enhance reading interests in students. The program was implemented in an elementary school. Interested and committed persons were called together to improve

performance in reading. A volunteer reading program evolved to enhance attitudes in reading. Parents and high school students read aloud and listened to third grade students read. The students selected to participate in the program were performing at least six months below grade placement. Formal assessment was not made to evaluate the program. Results indicated that more students were using the library and evidence of positive attitudes were noted.

Munson-Benson (1988) recommends a Book Nook Program for those that want to effect a positive change in reading. The Book Nook Program compliments basal instruction and does not purport to be the instructional program. The program uses 20 picture-book collections that represents an important genre or theme. These books are borrowed from a public library by volunteers. The volunteers are comprised of parents and senior citizens. The books are changed every six-to-eight weeks. A volunteer reads aloud to students in a comfortable and inviting environment created in the classroom.

Read-aloud sessions encourage students to contribute spontaneous writing and art expressions. Materials to promote active participation are included in the program. Suggestions for introducing the books are also included. Invitations are issued to encourage follow-up activities in a book or the collection. The read-aloud program of children's literature in classrooms has produced positive results. Expressions of creativity and opportunities to share discoveries are demonstrated. This program ensures that library books are read to every student. The student has the opportunity to use the collection at home and school.

Another solution to increase the reading ability of learning disabled resource students involves better teacher and parent communication. Walde and Baker (1990) purport that quality parental involvement is critical for academically disadvantaged students. Teachers asked for parental participation by signing homework, reading to the child and attending conferences. This strategy worked in helping students

when the parents were willing to assume the responsibility and had the necessary skills.

Barell (1985) believes that teachers must help students to unlearn behaviors that suppress complex thinking. Most students learn that teachers have the right answers and do not develop independent-thinking skills. Students believe that teachers decide what to do, when and how to think, and make decisions. Students also learn that learning comes from the teacher and the text book. These student beliefs inhibit the development of complex-thinking skills. Teachers can take specific actions to introduce new learning behaviors that will facilitate in the development of complex-thinking skills.

There are solutions that will help teachers create an environment that will encourage students to become independent thinkers (Barell, 1985). Making sure that students know classmates names encourages more receptiveness to the opinions of others. Anonymity can hinder students responses and inquiries to each others reasoning. Cognizance of the reasoning process of other

students' ideas is reflective of cognitive development. The students should be expected to paraphrase and build on the responses of others. Interaction among students creates an environment that stimulates critical-thinking skills.

The practicum writer and resource teacher understands the problem of students not knowing each others names. This occurs because new students are continually entering the program. The representation of different grade levels within the resource room also contributes to anonymity among the students. The writer could use the information from Barell (1985) and apply it in the resource program to reduce anonymity among the students.

The practicum writer should explore ways to create an environment that stimulates critical-thinking skills. Interaction among the resource students' ideas and responses should increase and encourage complex thinking. The students could be asked to generate alternative solutions to problems after the teacher reads a story. Interaction among the resource students

could be encouraged by group discussion for alternative solutions in problem solving. The students should also expect to support the solutions generated and explain why they were chosen. The students could demonstrate solutions for problem solving through illustrations and sharing experiences. The students could individually or as a group share the solutions that were generated and illustrated. The illustrations could also demonstrate the results that could occur from alternative solutions generated for problem solving.

A volunteer tutorial enrichment program in an elementary school in Muskogee, Oklahoma was initiated by Harris and Owens (1984). The volunteers were community members, senior citizens and parents. This program was initiated to provide a valuable resource to the students and in pursuit of excellence in education. The target students were those that had difficulty functioning in large classrooms and were below level. The volunteers worked with two-to-four students twice a week, for 30 minutes. Each student received at least 10 minutes of individualized instruction. Interrelated

activities to enhance classroom academics were used. The students remained in the tutorial program until the skill requirements were met. The program also provided critical-thinking strategies to develop a positive self-image and listening skills. The students and community benefited from the volunteer program. The efficacy of the volunteer program was demonstrated by more parental involvement at home and school.

The solution to the problem of students' low reading ability as demonstrated by skills assessment scores of below 80 percent mastery was based on the strategies that were suggested and evaluated as possible solutions. The solution strategy chosen by the writer involved organizing and implementing a community volunteer program. This solution was the most appropriate to fit the situation.

The solution strategy that the writer selected from the research was incorporated along with teacher ideas. A volunteer program that utilized community resources to provide additional reinforcement and enrichment was implemented. The elementary school

tutorial enrichment program included in the research served as a model for the practicum. The program was effective for students and promoted community involvement. The writer also used additional ideas to make the necessary adaptations to fit the practicum site.

The solution strategy was chosen for these reasons: (a) the utilization of community volunteers facilitated positive involvement between school and community, (b) the volunteers included senior citizens and other interested community members, (c) tutorial services that enhanced classroom activities were used, (d) enrichment activities developed critical-thinking skills, listening skills and positive self-worth.

Additional ideas that the writer included were as follows: (a) specific skills reinforcement activities, (b) methods that improve student attitudes towards reading, (c) activities that increase enjoyment and self-assurance towards reading, (d) brainstorming activities that encourage students to generate alternative solutions for problem solving in stories

read, (e) shared individual and/or group illustrations that depict problem-solving skills, (f) students that expect to explain why specific alternative solutions were chosen and what results would occur.

CHAPTER III

Method

The solution strategies that were used in the practicum were implemented by retired citizens, community members and the Specific Learning Disabilities Resource Teacher. A volunteer intervention program was implemented to increase the reading ability of five students.

The practicum writer found it necessary to find innovative ways of recruiting volunteers to participate in the project. The volunteers were expected to make a weekly commitment and be trained for tutoring specific skills. The existing volunteer services within the school were unavailable to the writer. The volunteers at the facility were already assigned to other teachers and students. The resource teacher began a search for agencies and businesses that could assist in providing volunteers. The writer contacted the Volunteer Center of Sarasota which is a part of the United Way Agency of Florida. The Director was contacted by telephone and was responsive to the project as presented by the

writer. The Director told the teacher that consideration would be given to the project and would contact the teacher. Within a week, the writer was contacted and given the names of three possible volunteers. The writer called the volunteers and explained the project. All three of the individuals called were interested and wanted to participate in the program.

The writer also contacted a local bank that was involved in school partnerships. The writer called the personnel manager and presented the project and the need for volunteers. The personnel manager expressed the interest of the bank and its philosophy of involvement in education. The personnel manager issued a bulletin to the employees that described the project. Any employee that was interested was asked to call the personnel office. Within two weeks, the personnel office called with a list of interested employees that had responded to the bulletin. The writer called those bank employees and made the first appointment for the orientation.

The writer organized the practicum and participated in the implementation along with the volunteers. The project began by inviting the volunteers to observe the students and attend an orientation meeting. A training session preceded the first tutorial session. The 12-week project involved weekly sessions with the writer, target students and the volunteers. Activities and learning games were used to increase reading skills. At the conclusion of each session, a volunteer reporting form was used to describe activities and student responses. The writer monitored and discussed the students' progress with the volunteers. Modifications and changes were made at three-week intervals. Brainstorming was used to generate ideas for changes or adjustments.

During the practicum, the writer evaluated the students by administering weekly spelling tests. At the conclusion of the practicum, the writer evaluated the effectiveness of the Community Volunteer Intervention Program. The writer administered a skills assessment test and observational checklists to

determine effectiveness. The students' ability to generate alternative solutions to solve problems in stories read would be evidenced by individual and group illustrations.

The games and activities that were used in the project were sequential and followed the skills for the weekly spelling tests. The games were also selected to correlate with the skills that needed to be developed by the students as demonstrated by the skills assessment tests. The weekly spelling vocabulary was written on index cards and then the letters were glued for a kinesthetic approach. The sentences were written on sentence strips that enlarged the letters and isolated each sentence. The words on the sentence strips were written in green if phonetically regular. The sight words were written in red. A variety of games were used to teach and reinforce skills that the five students demonstrated as needed to increase reading abilities. A tic, tac, toe board made of poster paper with words needed to master was designed by the teacher. An apple game was constructed by the

teacher that would teach the short vowel "a". Apple shapes were designed from construction paper and short "a" words were written on each. A similar game was designed from construction paper and cut into umbrella shapes, to teach the short vowel "u". Sight words were written on index cards to play a "draw and go fishing" game. A picture dictionary was also provided to show the students the meaning of unknown vocabulary. Stories and books were available on the reading level of the students.

The first week provided an opportunity for the volunteers to observe the target students in the resource room environment. An orientation meeting followed to discuss school rules and protocol. An overview of the Specific Learning Disabilities Resource Program was conducted, to facilitate understanding of the students' schedule and needs. The practicum objectives were discussed to clarify goals. A date was set for the training session.

The focus of the second week was a training session to inform the volunteers about available games

and related skills. At this time, the writer and volunteers brainstormed to generate ideas to facilitate accomplishment of the objectives. The volunteers' preferences and special talents were considered. The strengths of the tutors were matched to the students to maximize success for both. The volunteers were asked to used a sign-in sheet for the weekly sessions. The sign-in sheet included a reporting form to record activities used and students' responses. A folder for each student was kept for the volunteer and teacher to access the reporting form data. Each week the volunteer could review the information from the previous tutorial sessions. The students' schedule was available in order to establish the dates for the tutoring sessions.

The third week was used to have the volunteers and students meet and begin the first tutorial sessions. The tutors worked with the students in a designated area within the resource room. The volunteers used learning games to facilitate in the students' skill development. The writer previously described some of

the games that were available for the students. The games provided each student with skills reinforcement for deficit areas as demonstrated on the pretests. The weekly vocabulary was orally reviewed to assist the students in decoding and comprehension skills. Vocabulary flash cards with glued letters were used to provide further practice.

A picture dictionary was available to provide visuals of the word meanings that were unknown. The students were encouraged to discuss personal experiences that related to the vocabulary. Brainstorming was used to generate alternate words to develop and extend the vocabulary. This technique was utilized to facilitate in the development of critical-thinking skills. The weekly sentences were read by the students. A discussion was provided for the students that did not understand the meaning of the sentences. The meaning of the sentences were illustrated by the students after adequate discussion. The volunteers completed the reporting forms for recording activities and student responses, after the tutorial sessions.

The writer administered the spelling tests at the end of the week. The scores were recorded and used to monitor the students' progress.

The fourth week continued with the strategies that were implemented from the previous week. Specific skill games were utilized to improve reading and spelling skills. The weekly spelling words and sentences were reviewed and discussed. The techniques described in the second week were used to develop vocabulary meaning and comprehension. At the end of the tutorial sessions, the volunteers completed the volunteer reporting forms. The forms were used to record the games used and students' responses. The writer administered the weekly spelling tests. The scores were recorded for use in future planning sessions.

After the fifth session, three weeks of interaction between the tutors and students had occurred. Evaluation of the strategies were conducted to problem-solve and review the students' progress. The rapport that had developed between the tutors and

students was an important factor in determining any necessary changes. Brainstorming between the writer and volunteers determined which games and modifications would be used.

The sixth week implemented changes and/or modifications that were generated from the brainstorming session of the previous week. Appropriate activities were used by the volunteers to reinforce the students' reading skills. The writer began to disseminate materials to the volunteers to establish rapport, confidence and build responsible volunteer behaviors. A list of desirable volunteer teaching behaviors (Appendix C:53) was distributed. The volunteers completed the reporting forms to track activities and the students' behaviors. The resource teacher administered the weekly spelling tests. The scores were recorded to assess the students' progress during the project.

The sixth week also included the beginning of the implementation of the fourth practicum objective. The resource teacher was responsible for this activity,

after the weekly tutorial sessions. The critical-thinking skills activity was very important to facilitate in the development of the five students problem-solving skills. The writer explored ways in which to ensure that the students would interact as a group. The research by Barell (1985) stated that interaction among the students would stimulate critical-thinking skills. The students were provided with opportunities to individually and in groups generate alternate solutions to problems in stories previously read in tutorial sessions. The students were expected to paraphrase and build on the responses of peers. The results of the solutions generated were shared and explored by the students. Individual and group illustrations were produced that depicted the alternate solutions and the results that would occur. The writer began these brainstorming sessions by encouraging the students to work and share solutions in groups to gain confidence. These group sessions were expanded to include solutions to problems that were generated by individual students. The students were

initially cautious when expected to produce individual responses. The students adapted to both group and individual brainstorming and interaction sessions. The problem-solving activities were implemented by the resource teacher after the tutorial sessions.

The seventh week was a continuance of the activities that were previously determined as effective. The volunteers worked with the students to increase reading and spelling skills. The writer distributed to the volunteers a code of ethics (Appendix D:55). This was used to build confidence and establish the significance of volunteer efforts in education. After each tutorial session, the volunteers completed the reporting forms. The reporting forms provided the resource teacher with data from the tutorial sessions. The writer administered the weekly spelling tests on the last day of the week.

The eighth week provided an opportunity for the volunteers and writer to meet after the tutorial sessions to discuss the students' progress. The weekly spelling scores of the students were considered in

planning future activities. At this meeting, new games were reviewed to reinforce the students' deficit skill areas. Any problems that had occurred were also discussed. The writer involved the volunteers in planning all of the activities to maximize participation. The tutors recorded the games played and the students' responses. The reporting forms were used the following week to review previous strategies and student responses. The weekly spelling tests were given by the writer to determine the students' progress.

The ninth week was used to implement any changes or modifications that were necessary. Appropriate games were used by the volunteers to increase the students' reading and spelling skills. The writer provided a list of age specific student characteristics and needs (Appendix E:57) to facilitate the volunteers' understanding of the students. The tutors and resource teacher discussed the data that was recorded on the reporting forms. Monitoring the students' progress was accomplished through the weekly

spelling tests. The tests were given by the resource teacher.

The tenth week proceeded with the planned activities and games as determined by the volunteers and the writer. Specific skills activities were used to reinforce the students' deficit skill areas as demonstrated on the pretests. A review of the weekly vocabulary and sentences was conducted. The techniques utilized the glued flash cards and sentence strips. An opportunity for the teacher and volunteers to briefly discuss the tutorial sessions was provided by the reporting forms. The writer administered the weekly vocabulary and sentence tests.

After the tutorial sessions of the eleventh week, the writer and the volunteers discussed the students' progress. The practicum objectives were reviewed to clarify goals and focus on new strategies. The writer and the volunteers planned activities for the last week. The reporting forms were completed by the tutors to record the activities and students' responses during the tutorial sessions. The data collected from the

reporting forms served as a review for the following week. The writer dictated the words and sentences for the week to monitor progress.

The last week implemented new strategies that were planned by the writer and volunteers. The last tutorial sessions were very important to conclude the practicum. The final tutorial sessions represented the conclusion of the activities to accomplish the practicum objectives. The significance of the project was established by the participation and dedication of the persons involved. The students and the writer presented the volunteers with a certificate of appreciation and completion. The writer evaluated the efficacy of the practicum by administering a skills assessment test to each of the five students. Teacher observational checklists were also used to rate the students' self-assurance and enjoyment towards reading. The ability to generate alternate solutions to problem solve in stories read was evidenced through the students' illustrations.

CHAPTER IV

Results

At the conclusion of the 12-week practicum, the teacher administered a skills assessment posttest to each of the five students. The skills assessment pretest and posttest scores were analyzed and compared. The students demonstrated an increase in reading skills of more than 20 percent. This increase was the criteria for determining the successful accomplishment of the first objective.

Student A received a score of 30 percent on the skills assessment pretest. The student scored 60 percent on the posttest. The pretest score was increased by 100 percent. Student A successfully accomplished the first practicum objective to increase reading skills by 20 percent on the skills assessment posttest.

Student B scored 42 percent on the skills assessment pretest. The student scored a 73 percent on the posttest. An increase of over 73 percent was achieved by Student B on a comparison of the pretest

and posttest scores. The student exceeded the requirement of a 20 percent increase in scores on the first objective.

Student C received a 62 percent on the skills assessment pretest. The posttest score of 85 percent demonstrated an increase of 37 percent. Mastery level on the skills assessment posttest was achieved by the student. The first objective was accomplished and exceeded by the student.

Student D scored below the master level on the skills assessment pretest. The student's pretest score was 62 percent. The student scored an 80 percent on the posttest which also indicates mastery level. The pretest score was increased by more than 29 percent. The first objective was successfully accomplished by this student.

Student E scored a 60 percent on the skills assessment pretest. After participation in the 12-week project, the writer administered a posttest. The student received a score of 80 percent and achieved mastery level on the posttest. The writer analyzed and

compared the pretest and posttest scores and determined an increase of over 33 percent in skills had occurred. This student also successfully accomplished the first objective of the practicum.

During the practicum, the students were given weekly spelling tests. Before implementation of the project, the students' weekly spelling test scores ranged between 37 and 70 percent. After the project, the five students' average of scores ranged from 80 to 96 percent. The students scored at least 80 percent on the weekly tests over the 12-week period and achieved the criteria for successful accomplishment of the second objective.

The third objective rated the students' enjoyment and self-assurance towards reading. The pretest ratings indicated that the students needed to improve in both self-assurance and enjoyment categories of the ratings. The writer observed and rated the students on a scale of often, sometimes or never. The pretest ratings in the enjoyment towards reading were in the "never" category. The posttest ratings were in the

"often" category for the five students. The ratings for self-assurance on the pretests were in the "sometimes" and "never" categories. The posttest ratings were in the "often" and "sometimes" categories. After participation in the practicum, the students demonstrated an increased enjoyment and self-assurance towards reading.

The fourth objective was included to facilitate in the development of the five students' ability to problem solve in stories read. The students were expected to individually and in groups generate alternate solutions to problems in stories read. The students were then expected to paraphrase and build on the responses of others. The results of the solutions generated were shared and explored by the students. Individual and group illustrations were produced that depicted the alternate solutions and the results that occurred. The fourth objective was considered successful as demonstrated by the students' ability to generate alternate solutions to solve problems in

stories read as evidenced by group and individual illustrations.

The 12-week practicum also included results that were not established to be formally measured. Additional results that the writer and volunteers observed included: (a) positive role models from within the business community were established, (b) bank volunteers were paid by employers for up to two hours a week for tutorial services, (c) student appreciation of a support person to interact with regularly had occurred, (d) intergenerational rapport was developed with the retired volunteers, (e) the development of positive community relationships between the school and community, (f) enrichment of the curriculum. The resource teacher considered the practicum successful in accomplishing the established objectives and the results that occurred as by-products.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

The results obtained from the 12-week practicum made the determination that the volunteer tutorial program was effective. The practicum was successful and the Community Volunteer Intervention Program will be expanded to include students that demonstrate a need for additional reinforcement. These students may exhibit a need for assistance in homework, independent assignments or reading activities.

The teacher discussed the practicum and its outcome with the Specific Learning Disabilities Supervisor. The teacher was requested by the Supervisor to share the information about the practicum to the self-contained and resource teachers. The writer presented the volunteer program at the county-wide monthly specific learning disabilities meeting for self-contained teachers (Attachment A:62). The writer also shared the project with the resource teachers at the county-wide monthly meeting. The writer was invited and shared the practicum and its outcome with

the members of the Association For Children With Learning Disabilities (Attachment B:64). The writer, Specific Learning Disabilities Supervisor and interested persons brainstormed to develop a county-wide volunteer intervention program for learning disabled resource students. All interested teachers will meet with the writer to assist in beginning a volunteer tutorial program at other sites.

The implications of a volunteer tutorial program for learning disabled students in a state budget crisis was explored. A determination was made that both resource and self-contained learning disabled students could benefit from a community volunteer program to increase reading skills and abilities.

References

Anderson, Ora Sterling. "Read Aloud Tutoring: A Program to Enhance Reading Interests." Reading Horizons, Fall 1984, Vol. 25 (No. 1), pp. 14-16.

Costa, Arthur, Ed. Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1985.

Goldstone Bette P. "Visual Interpretation of Children's Books." The Reading Teacher, April 1989, pp. 592-595.

Harris, Alberta Farmer, and L. Owens. Franklin Elementary School Tutorial Enrichment Program in Elementary Education. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 250 075) Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1984.

Herrmann, Beth Ann. "Two Approaches For Helping Poor Readers Become More Strategic." The Reading Teacher, October 1988, pp. 24-28.

Munson-Benson, Tunie. "Books in the Classroom." Horn Book Magazine. March/April 1988, Vol. 64 (No. 2), pp. 251-253.

South Carolina State Department of Education. Setting Up the School Volunteer Program. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 262 887) Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1985.

Walde, Anne C. and K. Baker. "How Teachers View the Parents' Role in Education." Phi Delta Kappan, December 1990, pp. 319-322.

Weiss Jill, et al. Paired Reading with Adult Volunteer Tutors as Reading Intervention for Students with Reading Difficulties. (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 305 606) Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1989.

Bibliography

Binkley, Marilyn R. Becoming a Nation of Readers: What Parents Can Do. U.S. Department of Education Publication, No. 88-802. Washington, D.C.: D.C. Heath and Company in Cooperation with the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U.S. Department of Education, 1988.

Brountas, Maria. "Partners in Teaching." Teaching K-8, November/December 1990, pp. 78-80.

Davies, Don. "Schools Reaching Out: Family, School, and Community Partnerships For Student Success." Phi Delta Kappan, January 1991, pp. 376-382.

Deighan, William P. "Better Than Brainstorming." The Executive Educator, September 1990, p. 24.

Richmond Public Schools, VA. Parent Education Resource Center. Volunteers: A Handbook. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 313 810) Washington, D. C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1985.

Russell, Milicent D. Increasing Home and School Involvement of Parents of Primary Grade Students through Communication, In-Service Training, and Workshops. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 307 051) Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1989.

South Carolina State Department of Education, Columbia. State Resource Guide for School Volunteer Coordinators. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 291 497) Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1987.

True, D. and P. Ehda. Parent Volunteer Handbook. Teachers Need Parents-Parents Need Teachers-Students Need Both. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 240 170) Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1980.

Appendices

Appendix A

Teacher Checklist: Enjoyment

TEACHER CHECKLIST: ENJOYMENT _____

Name

Directions: Complete the checklist for each child by reading each criterion statement and checking the box below the rating that best describes the child's enjoyment of reading.

Observational Category: Enjoyment	Often	Sometimes	Never
The child:			
1. chooses to spend free time looking at books	☐	☐	☐
2. shows interest in a variety of reading materials	☐	☐	☐
3. tells about reading experiences with enthusiasm (e.g., talks about stories, draws pictures about stories)	☐	☐	☐
4. expresses feelings about reading	☐	☐	☐
5. responds to humor in reading materials	☐	☐	☐
6. responds appropriately to different types of reading materials	☐	☐	☐
7. responds personally to stories (e.g., laughs, gets excited, feels sad)	☐	☐	☐
8. shares stories with others (e.g., shows pictures to a friend, acts out parts of a story)	☐	☐	☐
9. has favorite stories	☐	☐	☐

Comments (Use this space for additional notes or anecdotal observations.)

Alvermann, Donna, et al. Language Assessments, Attitude/Appreciation Assessments. Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1989.

Appendix B

Teacher Checklist: Self-Assurance

TEACHER CHECKLIST: SELF-ASSURANCE _____
Name

Directions: Complete the checklist for each child by reading each criterion statement and checking the box below the rating that best describes the child's self-assurance in reading.

Observational Category: Self-Assurance	Often	Sometimes	Never
The child:			
1. **expects to succeed as a reader** (Examples: looks forward to reading stories and books; talks about books that [s]he plans to read in future; etc.)	☐	☐	☐
2. **regards self as a good reader** (Examples: points out own strengths in reading; talks about texts that [s]he has read successfully; discusses own abilities in a positive way; etc.)	☐	☐	☐
3. **exhibits confidence in own reading ability** (Examples: begins reading assignments with enthusiasm; answers questions about reading material with confidence; asks for additional reading materials or assignments; takes chances at making mistakes; etc.)	☐	☐	☐
4. **shows pride in reading improvement** (Examples: recognizes improvement in own reading; points out improvements in own reading abilities; shares successes in reading with teacher, parents, and peers; etc.)	☐	☐	☐

Comments (Use this space for additional notes or anecdotal observations.)

Alvermann, Donna, et al. Language Assessments, Attitude/Appreciation Assessments. Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1989.

Appendix C

Desirable Teaching Behaviors

FOR VOLUNTEERS

desirable teaching behaviors

1. Before starting an activity, explain what you are going to do.
2. Before starting an activity, give the learner time to familiarize himself with the material(s).
3. Ask questions which have more than one correct answer.
4. Ask questions which require multiple-word answers.
5. Encourage the learner to enlarge upon his or her answer.
6. Get the learner to ask questions.
7. Give the learner time to think about the problem; don't be too quick to help.
8. Get the learner to make judgments on the basis of evidence rather than by guessing.
9. Praise the learner when he or she does well or takes small steps in the right direction.
10. Let the learner know when his or her answer or work is wrong, but do so in a positive or neutral manner.

Richmond Public School, VA. Parent Education Resource Center. Volunteers: A Handbook. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 313 810) Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1985.

Appendix D

Ethics for Volunteers

ETHICS FOR VOLUNTEERS

My interest and concern for children and my belief that better education provides for more meaningful living has challenged me to become a part of the effort to improve and enrich the educational experiences offered by this school.

I understand that I, as a volunteer, do not replace a teacher, but that I offer supplementary services which can increase a teacher's effectiveness.

I recognize that a professional will decide the duties I will perform, the authority I will be given, and the information and materials I will need. I will accept responsibilities assigned and will expect to account for these services.

I realize that love and respect for children are the most important ingredients in working effectively with them. I value the achievements of children, enjoy working with them, and will keep confidential information about them confidential.

I will contribute to the success of the over-all volunteer program by being dependable and consistent, by following regulations and procedues, by discussing specific problems with the volunteer coordinator, and by observing discretion in commenting on school matters.

Any volunteer who cannot
respect and uphold these
ideals may be dismissed.

Written by a Greenville school volunteer.

Adopted by the Charleston County School District.

South Carolina State Department of Education, Columbia. State Resource Guide for School Volunteer Coordinators. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 291 497) Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1987.

Appendix E

The First Grade Child

The Second Grade Child

The Third Grade Child

The First Grade Child

The best thing you can do for your child is to enjoy him. Laugh with him when he is active and gay. Give him time to learn. Expect mistakes and much forgetting. Do not let your ideals for him make you require too much of him. Being aware of several general characteristics common to first grade children will help you in understanding your child as he grows month by month.

The First Grade Child will probably be:

1. Impulsive - going from one extreme to another, with spurts of affection and antagonism. There will be periods of laughter and tears in quick succession, periods of deep thinking and periods of inattention.
2. Often dawdling - more interested in playing than in eating or dressing.
3. Often careless of his clothes.
4. Frequently combative as though at war with himself and the world. When thwarted he resorts to such behaviors as sulking or mutilating the possessions of those involved in the thwarting. (In general, boys are more quarrelsome than girls.)
5. Desiring to be a winner, first to be chosen, best liked, the biggest.
6. Boastful - trying to establish his own superiority.
7. Active, climbing, running, wrestling; trying to do things too hard for him.

The First Grade Child needs:

1. A sense of security and a feeling of being loved, no matter what he does.
2. Generous praise and not too much criticism of errors.
3. To be distracted from undesirable behaviors in kindly ways.
4. Opportunities to show what he can do and to talk about himself and his interests.
5. Broadening experiences to satisfy his fast growing interests.
6. A knowledge of property rights to accompany his collecting tendencies.

Parents can help by:

1. Having a sense of humor and infinite patience to help him through this period of opposite behaviors.
2. Avoiding direct clashes of will.
3. Seeing that he has enough rest, nourishing food and exercises.
4. Racing with him to overcome dawdling.
5. Planning surprises.
6. Ignoring his grimaces, giggling, and silly actions. Giving him something to do before visitors arrive so that he will not feel it necessary for him to act foolish to get attention.
7. Skillfully distracting him from difficulties by having some humorous tricks up your sleeve to build up his good behavior. Demanding little of him on "bad" days.
8. Remembering that there is nothing wrong with him but six-year-oldness, and that he must be guided wisely.

True, D., and P. Ehda. Parent Volunteer Handbook. Teachers Need Parents-Parents Need Teachers-Students Need Both. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 240 170) Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) 1980.

The Second Grade Child

Every child is an individual who grows and develops at his own rate. Children in the same grade may be expected to differ widely from others in their group. These are some characteristics and needs that generally apply to most of the children at a certain age.

The Second Grade Child will probably be:

1. Seven or eight years old.
2. Two or three inches taller than last year.
3. Sturdy and healthy.
4. Still for only a short time.
5. An eating problem.
6. Losing deciduous teeth.
7. Emotional - particularly fearful of imaginary and improbably dangers (dark, doctor)
8. Showing desire for freedom and to grow away from adults.
9. Agressive and sympathetic by turns.
10. A boaster.
11. Sensitive to ridicule, failure, and loss of prestige.
12. Playing with boys and girls as equals.
13. Interested in almost everything of the present time and of the immediate environment.
14. A good listner.

He will probably have:

1. Strong liking for anything that runs on wheels, like scooters.
2. Beginning of manipulative skills.
3. Increased interest in team and group activities.
4. Much enjoyment from dramatic play (identifying self with cowboys, Indians, etc.).
5. A well-developed competitive spirit.
6. Lengthening periods of calmness and self-absorption.

The Second Grade Child needs:

1. To have frequent periods of rest and relaxation.
2. Proper medical care for usual children's diseases.
3. Adult approval.
4. To be like his friends.
5. Good food at regular intervals.

Parents can help by:

1. Providing opportunities for muscular activities (climbing, etc.).
2. Giviing child the feeling that you are "standing by".
3. Giving child some economic independence through regular allowance or opportunities to earn money.
4. Setting up regular habits for food and frequent rest periods.
5. Providing regular examinations by doctor and dentist.
6. Setting examples as to habits of tidiness, posture, etc.
7. Giving the child a part in some aspects of family planning.

The Third Grade Child

At this age, the child is changing from having no social awareness to a growing ability to make social responses. He may continue to hit, tease and punch for the fun of it, but such behavior normally recedes and more approved responses become increasingly habitual. He is serious about himself, impressed with his own ability to imitate adult behavior, and likes to take responsibility. He needs a very careful balance between adult guidance and independent action.

The Third Grade Child will probably be:

1. Seven, eight or nine years old.
2. More able in controlling large muscles than the smaller ones.
3. Developing in eye-hand coordination.
4. Extremely interested in gangs, teams, and his own sex.
5. Careless about how dirty he gets.
6. More likely to wear the most tattered sweater instead of the newest ones.
7. Sensitive to ridicule, failure, and loss of prestige.
8. Unable to maintain a very long attention span.

He will probably have:

1. Desire for group play activity and teams.
2. Interest in dressing up and playing parts, as cops, robbers, Indians, etc.
3. Tendency to use unacceptable language.
4. Strong sense of justice as he sees it.
5. Contradictory traits, such as fighting best friends, sisters, or brothers.
6. Varying emotional patterns of fear, joy, anger, jealousy, and affection.
7. Fear of such things as blood, ghosts, death, dead animals, lightening, solitude, the dark, robbers, and even the doctor.
8. Ideas and desires to make things which are beyond his ability.
9. Sexual modesty.
10. No discrimination of social position, race, or religion.

The Third Grade Child needs:

1. Ten to twelve hours of sleep.
2. A well organized day.
3. All the good food he will eat.
4. Sympathy with his tendency to establish some independence from adults.
5. Adult approval to the extent that he will feel they will "stand by" and really care.
6. To do something or be something which makes him feel important, although he does not want to be singled out or make conspicuous.
7. To be included in family and school planning.

Parents can help by:

1. Setting up regular habits for food and rest.
2. Teaching him to use his own towel and glass, to put on appropriate wraps and to keep pencils and fingers out of the mouth.
3. Providing toys that will develop good basic motor and muscular skills.
4. Giving him enough freedom so that he will not develop the attitude that his parents are too bossy, too strict, or just "not fair".
5. Taking time to talk, explain, and reason with the child.
6. Praising him for good work or behavior.
7. Accepting his friends and planning happy times for them.
8. Providing opportunities for him to earn money, either at home or nearby.

Attachments

Attachment A

Agenda for the Specific Learning Disabilities
Elementary Full-Time Meeting

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

3550 Wilkinson Road
Sarasota, Florida 34231
(813) 922-0002

Sandra L. Soper
Program Specialist
Specific Learning Disabilities Program

SLD

ELEMENTARY FULL TIME MEETING

AGENDA

Thursday, March 21, 1991

1. SLD VOLUNTEER PROGRAM - CYNTHIA LANIER

2. SUMMER SCHOOL UPDATE

3. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

4. SHARED BEST PRACTICES

5. SPRING ODS CONFERENCE

6. MATERIALS SHARED AT PROJECT READ WORKSHOP

7. OTHER

Attachment B

Bulletin for the Association For Children
With Learning Disabilities

Sarasota Association For Children
With Learning Disabilities
Proudly Presents
TWO Exciting ways to help YOUR Child!!!

Cynthia Lanier

Community Volunteers & The LD Child - Making a Difference

Sarasota County Student
Center Multi Purpose Room
Beneva Road, midway
between Wilkinson & Proctor

Wednesday,
March 13, '91
7:00-9 p.m.